

Economic Development Advisory Boards in Lebanon

Economic development advisory boards (EDABs) were the focal point of ICMA's successful efforts to help five Lebanese cities develop tailored, viable local economic development (LED) strategies. Recognizing that LED is critical both to strengthening the capacity of individual cities and to reviving the national economy, the government of Lebanon awarded funding—made available through the World Bank—for ICMA to implement a program to foster economic growth in Tripoli, Jounieh, Zahle, Saida, and Sour.

An EDAB was formed in each of the cities to ensure input and support from stakeholders and communication among the players in LED efforts. The boards included representation from:

- Public and private sectors
- Labor and management
- Small, medium, and large businesses and industries
- Youth
- Education
- Municipal and appropriate national officials
- Minority groups.



Participants at an LED workshop in Lebanon.

The board's responsibilities included:

- Gathering information about the local economic situation, including problems faced by current businesses, obstacles to attracting future businesses, and assets the community can offer
- Participating in strategic planning for economic development
- Sharing information with and soliciting feedback from the constituencies they represent and from the broader public
- Inventorying community resources to determine whether proposed strategies are viable
- Serving as a link between elected officials and the public
- Serving as the key advisor and a sounding board to the council president and governing body for LED issues and activities
- Serving as a resource for local economic development departments once they are established.

The usefulness of the EDAB concept was reinforced by comments from several advisory board members after an EDAB meeting; the board members told the local mayor that regardless of what the overall LED project produced, it was already a success due to the formation of the advisory boards.

ABOUT ICMA

ICMA (International City/County Management Association) is the premier local government leadership and management organization worldwide. Its mission is to create excellence in local governance by developing and advancing the professional management of local government. ICMA has been doing this since 1914 by providing technical and management assistance, training, and information resources to its members and the local government community. ICMA International was created in 1989 to further the ICMA mission worldwide. Since then it has successfully designed, implemented, and evaluated hundreds of international projects, establishing a solid reputation for its practical, hands-on approach to meeting global challenges.